

No. 3

THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Quebec, Canada, February 4, 1949

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Subject: Labrador-Quebec boundary as shown by maps
issued by the Government of Quebec

The Honorable

The Secretary of State

Washington, D.C.

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to a large map of the Province of Quebec (16 miles to the inch) issued by the Department of Lands and Forests of the Province of Quebec in 1946, which has recently been acquired by this Consulate. This map shows all of the Peninsula of Labrador (with the exception of all small islands off the Atlantic coast thereof) as a part of the Province of Quebec. The islands and a part of the coast of Newfoundland are shown in white, as are parts of other Canadian provinces and of the United States. The various parts of the Province of Quebec are in colors, which distinguish the counties and other subdivisions one from another; the color brown being used for all of central and northern Quebec and Labrador, which are together called on the map "Nouveau Quebec (Ungava)".

According to a reliable source, the last previous map of the Province issued by the Provincial Government was dated 1940, and showed Labrador in the same manner; maps issued in 1914 and 1924 showed a boundary some 25 to 30 miles inland from the Atlantic coast; and a map issued in 1927 showed the boundary as it was fixed by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in 1927. (Re Labrador Boundary, Dominion Law Reports, N.S., Vol. 2, 1927.)

In view of the current and future importance of iron ore in the Ungava region, and of the fact that the Province of Quebec is known to have granted concessions to the Hollinger North Shore Exploration Company and others within the boundary as fixed in 1927, it would appear to be worth while for the Department to have a record of the above information about maps issued by the Province of Quebec. The Department has been made aware of various steps that have been taken by the Government of M. Duplessis to assert its autonomy against what are referred to as

/ encroachments

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encroachments from Ottawa; and it is also well known that his Government has been active in trying to attract various industries to the Province of Quebec. It is obvious that, if there were a sporting chance of obtaining the revenue from concessions in the Ungava his Government would be glad to have it. That is speculative, and this Consulate has no reason to anticipate any moves in that direction; but the matter may bear watching at some time in the future, at which time old maps would doubtless be referred to as evidence that, since 1940, the Province of Quebec had ceased to accept the 1927 boundary.

Incidentally, the map of Ungava-Labrador in use in the office of the Industrial Commissioner of the City of Quebec, a copy of which was forwarded to the Embassy at Ottawa by this Consulate's letter of January 14, 1949, shows the 1927 boundary. It also shows that concessions granted by the Province of Quebec have all been inside that boundary.

As of possible use to the Department, there is enclosed a copy of the 1927 judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, cited above. There are copied below the two paragraphs in which the Judicial Committee summarized the contentions of the Dominion of Canada and of the Crown Colony of Newfoundland, respectively.

"At this point it is desirable to set out the contentions of the two parties. The contention of the Dominion is that the "coast" which by the commission and Proclamation of 1763, as modified by the subsequent statutes, was annexed to Newfoundland, is "a strip of maritime territory, extending from Cape Chidley at the entrance to Hudson Strait, to the eastern headland of the bay or harbour of Blanc Sablon on the Strait of Bellisle, and comprising, in its depth inland, only so much of the land immediately abutting on the sea, above low-water mark, as was accessible and useful to the British fishermen annually resorting to that coast in the ordinary conduct of their fishing operations, for the purposes of "the open and free fishery" extended to that coast by the Royal Proclamation and carried on there and for those purposes only;" but, recognizing that it may be found impracticable to lay down such a line upon the land, Canada suggests "that the boundary be located as a line to be drawn from the eastern headland of the bay or harbour of Blanc Sablon on the south to Cape Chidley on the north at a distance from high-water mark on the seacoast of the peninsula of Labrador of one mile.

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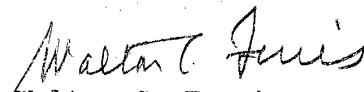
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"On the other hand, the contention of the Colony of Newfoundland is that the boundary should be "a line drawn due north from Ance Sablon as far as the fifty-second degree of North latitude, and should be traced from thence northwards to Cape Chidley along the crest of the watershed of the rivers flowing into the Atlantic Ocean."

It has been intimated to me that, since it was then known that there was some mineral wealth in the Ungava, and since the United Kingdom would have control of such wealth in a Crown colony, the Judicial Committee may have been influenced by that fact in arriving at its judgment. A careful perusal of the judgment, however, appears to show a rigid adherence to documentary evidence, and a closely knit argument that tend to rebut any such suspicion.

Respectfully yours,


Walton C. Ferris
American Consul General

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